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5. (Thrice Amended) A method for producing an ultra high molecular weight polyethylene molded [article] block having orientation of crystal planes in a direction parallel to a compression plane, comprising slightly crosslinking an ultra high molecular weight polyethylene molded [article] block by irradiating the [article] block with a high energy ray and thereby introducing a very small amount of crosslinking points into molecular chains of the [article] block, then heating the crosslinked ultra high molecular weight polyethylene molded [article] block up to a compression deformable temperature, compression-deforming the [article] block by compressing the [article] block in a direction perpendicular to the compression plane so as to deform the [article] block, and then cooling the [article] block while keeping the [article] block in a deformed state.

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9. (Thrice Amended) An ultra high molecular weight polyethylene molded [article] block having orientation of crystal planes in a direction parallel to a compression plane, said [article] block produced by slightly crosslinking an ultra high molecular weight polyethylene [article] block by irradiating the [article] block with a high energy ray and thereby introducing a very small amount of crosslinking points into molecular chains of the [article] block, then heating the crosslinked [article] block up to a compression deformable temperature, compression-deforming the [article] block by compressing the [article] block in a direction perpendicular to the compression plane so as to deform the [article] block, and then cooling and solidifying the [article] block while keeping the [article] block in a deformed state.

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10. (Twice Amended) Artificial joint for implantation in a joint of an animal comprising an ultra high molecular weight polyethylene molded [article] block having been crosslinked slightly and having been compression-deformed in a direction perpendicular to a

compression plane, cooled and solidified in a compression-deformed state so as to have orientation of crystal planes in a direction parallel to the compression plane.

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11. (Twice Amended) Artificial joint for implantation in a joint of an animal comprising an ultra high molecular weight polyethylene molded [article] block having been crosslinked slightly and having been compression-deformed in a direction perpendicular to a compression plane so as to have orientation of crystal planes in a direction parallel to the compression plane, wherein the melting temperature of the molded [article] block is in a range of 135 to 155°C.

REMARKS

By the present amendment, claims 1, 3, 5 and 9-11 have been amended to further clarify the concepts of the present invention by modifying the claims to recite a "molded block" instead of a "molded article." Support for these amendments may be found, among other places, in lines 21-22 of page three of the subject specification. Entry of these amendments is respectfully requested.

In the Action, claims 1, 3 and 5-13 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by the newly cited patent to Kitamaru et al. In making this rejection, it was asserted with respect to claims 1, 3, 5-8 and 9-13 that the noted portions of the Kitamaru et al patent teach an oriented crystallized UHMWPE molded article which has the characteristics as claimed. With respect to article claims 10-13, it was asserted that the additional recitations are directed to method limitations rather than product limitations. Reconsideration of this rejection in view of the above claim amendments and the following comments is respectfully requested.